

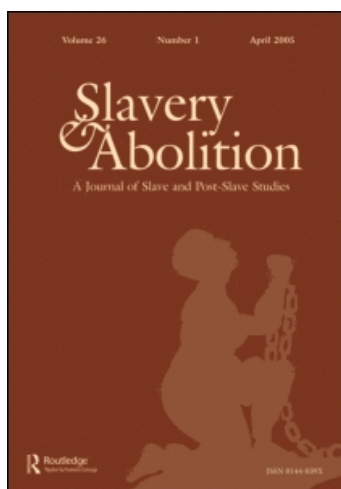
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The *Brooks* Slave Ship Icon: A 'Universal Symbol'?

Jacqueline Francis

*This contribution concerns the recuperation of the Brooks slave ship icon in late modern and contemporary art. Inspired by the *Description of the Slave Ship*, an eighteenth-century abolitionist drawing, twentieth- and twenty-first-century artists have transformed the image of the slaver into a dialogic and metaphoric site. For Thai-American artist Skowmon Hastanan, the slave ship relates not only to the transatlantic trade of the past, but also to contemporary human trafficking of Asian women. Whilst the slave ship retains its specificity, the art of Hastanan and others who are not of African descent indicates that it has become a functional and perhaps even 'universal' symbol of exploitation, oppression and injustice. This article considers what this phenomenon might mean for notions of universality and visual signs of blackness.*

This article is about the visual citation of the *Description of a Slave Ship* (1789), a rendering of the eighteenth-century Liverpool slaver named the *Brooks*, in late modern and contemporary art.¹ A direct and powerful portrayal of 454 Africans stowed into a ship's lower decks, the *Brooks* was interpreted in a plan drawing by an anonymous artist working for the British Society of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, which commissioned a broadside print based on this composition for international distribution (Webster, this issue). Two centuries later, the *Description* has inspired artists presently working in North America and Europe, among them Malcolm Bailey, Charles Campbell, Godfried Donkor, Sue Flowers, Skowmon Hastanan, Romuald Hazoumé and Howardena Pindell. These artists reference and transform the *Description*, harnessing its meaning and status as a cultural artifact of the transatlantic slave trade era and inserting its form into their mediations that are, variably autobiographical, dialogic, expansive and metaphorical. This article investigates both black and non-black artists'

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engagements with the *Description* as interventions that reconceptualise the image and explore its potential to be a symbol for universal humanism.

I am not the first to recognise the influence of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century slave ship representations in twentieth- and twenty-first-century visual culture. In *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and North America, 1780–1865*, artist and cultural studies scholar Marcus Wood discusses the *Description*'s incorporation into book illustration and album art. Among the examples Woods cites are the first edition dust jacket for Barry Unsworth's *Sacred Hunger*, an historical novel that shared the Booker Prize in 1992, and the cover for Bob Marley and the Wailers' 1979 album *Survival*, a design that juxtaposes an overview rendering of the *Brooks*' lower deck amidst the flags of independent African, Latin American and Caribbean nations that were former European colonies.² The *Survival* image of black endurance and African triumph (conceptualised by Marley's long-time album art director Neville Garrick) is also discussed in art historian Cheryl Finley's forthcoming book, *Committed to Memory: The Slave Ship Icon in the Black Atlantic Imagination*.³

Preceding these late twentieth-century visual cultural examples are the many representations of the Middle Passage, made in North America, the United Kingdom and Europe during the nineteenth century. Among these are J. M. W. Turner's famous oil painting *Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On* (1840) and Pretexat Oursel's undated chromolithograph *Transport des Negres dans le Colonies*. Other unnamed artists embraced the plan format of the *Description* in, for instance, *The French Ship, Vigilante, 1823* that appeared in the book *Affaire de la Vigilante: bâtiment négrier de Nantes* (1823); the *Cross-Section of Slave Ship, 1857* published that year in the *Illustrated London News*; and a cross-section drawing of an unnamed slave ship in Matthew Carey's *Reflections on the Causes that Led to the Formation of the Colonization Society* (1832).⁴ Different from these crisp diagrammatic representations of slavers are several surviving illustrations of slavers' holds that strike an emotive, realist tone: Johann Moritz Rugendas' watercolours for *Voyage Pittoresque dans le Bresil* (1835); a suite of five drawings of the captured slave ship *Zeldina* published in the *Illustrated London News* in 1857; and narrative drawings for Henry Howe's *Life and Death on the Ocean* (1855) and Richard Drake's pamphlet, *Revelations of a Slave Smuggler* (1860).⁵ In these works, Rugendas and the anonymous artists define each ship's African captives with intensely felt gestural and contour lines, imbuing the subjects' features with individuality – a quality absent from the patterned forms of the *Description*.⁶

More than a century later, Malcolm Bailey (b. 1947) produced *Hold, Separate But Equal* (1969) (Figure 1), a large, mixed media composition clearly indebted to the *Description*, for it too presents labeled cross-section and overhead views of a ship's lower decks, drawn with great formal rigor. Yet these passages in *Hold* seem to float above the blue-grey ground of the paper and Bailey's outline drawing of the ship is softer, offering a hull described by rounded, lyrical lines. And, whereas the *Description*'s artist drew a ship packed with black captives, Bailey depicts enslaved black and white men: one half of the ship's human cargo is painted jet-black, the other half chalk-white, and the racial groups occupy opposite sides of a ship that is divided right

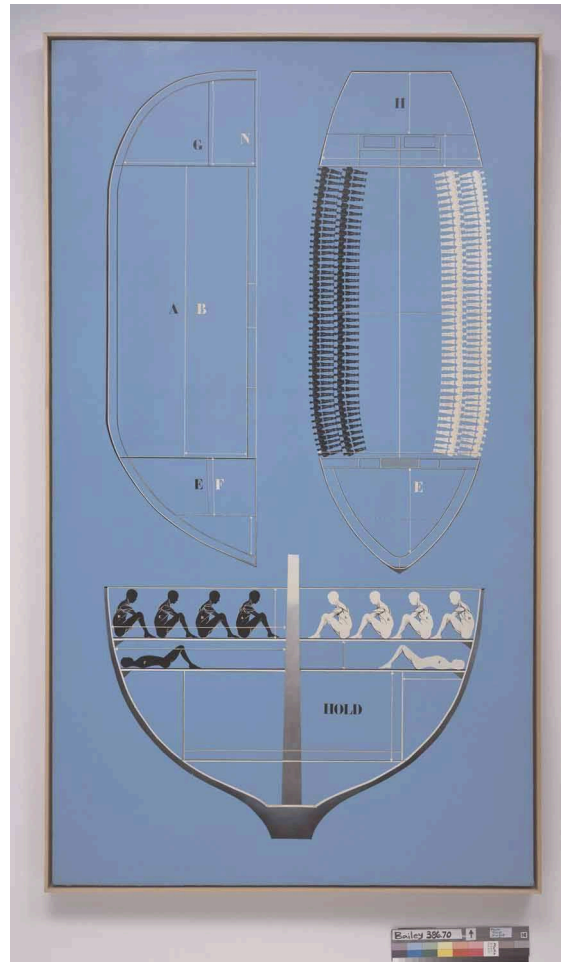


Figure 1. Malcolm Bailey, *Hold, Separate But Equal*, 1969. Synthetic polymer paint, press-type, watercolor and enamel on composition board, 7 feet x 48 inches. Gift of Barbara Jakobson and John R Jakobson (386.1970). Museum of Modern Art, New York. Digital image © Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, NY.

down its middle. As part of Bailey's 'Separate Not Equal' series of paintings and drawings first exhibited in New York in 1969, *Hold* was a pointed critique of American racial segregation. Moreover, Bailey announced himself to be a student of history because the series' title invokes the language of the 1896 United States Supreme Court case, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, in which the Justices ruled that separate public accommodations for whites and non-whites was legally permissible, provided they were comparable and equal.⁷ Mirroring the stark, lived realities of a racist society, *Hold* is, nonetheless, a visual reinterpretation of racial authority and rule, for Bailey makes both black and white men disempowered subjects and helpless victims trapped in the same boat. Bailey thus presses audiences – black and non-black,

female and male – to imagine themselves in the predicament of enslavement and as part of an involuntary diaspora.

The *Description* is a key component of Howardena Pindell's *Autobiography: Water/Ancestors/Middle Passage/Family Ghosts* (Figure 2). In this 1988 collage, it is a bluntly shaped, lightly coloured cutout that is affixed to the uneven canvas surface. The vessel is surrounded by dozens of animated elements, including a fantastically conceived self-portrait of the artist (b. 1943). Both her form and the boat are vertically oriented, but Pindell's standing figure is a much more complex monument, presenting eight arms that radiate outward and upward like hands on a clock. This body is especially reminiscent of the many-limbed representations of Hindu gods in traditional, Indian sculpture and of Leonardo Da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* (c.1487). In contrast to these art-historical paradigms of engaged beauty and grace, the artist presents a self that is thickened shape, emphatically stolid and grounded. By implication, this body appears powerful, and, indeed, its strong, raised arms might be read as power salutes, the



Figure 2. Howardena Pindell, *Autobiography: Water/Ancestors/Middle Passage/Family Ghosts*, 1988. Mixed media, 118 x 7 inches. Courtesy of Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut. The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Carlin Sumner Collection Fund.

symbolic gestures of nationalists (majority and minority), labour unionists, feminists and other activists asserting their claims for self-definition and self-determination.

While the artist's form dwarfs the torpedo shell-shaped slaver situated beside it, the latter's near blankness is an attention-grabbing contrast to the colourful collage elements dispersed across the pictorial ground: canvas swatches; cut-up and painted-over colour and black and white photographs of people; illustrations of African art objects and documented rituals; words and texts that reference racial segregation and discriminatory property laws. Especially intriguing are the photo-realistic snippets that are parts of bodies: black and non-black heads, torsos, grinning mouths, staring eyes and hands. These fragments comprise a constellation of diverse objects strewn around the principle figures of the slave ship and the artist, making all part of a greater whole. Still, *Autobiography* pointedly refutes corporeal and narrative unities that would make the slave ship the exclusive producer of the artist's body (the mother ship, so to speak). Instead, it manifests the artist's thinking about the experience and practice of self-description – that it is multilayered, fluid and heterogeneous, informed by countless things and relevant histories.

London-based, Ghana-born artist Godfried Donkor (b. 1964) also expands the meanings of the transatlantic slave ship in *From Slave to Champ I* (1992). In this mixed media on paper composition, Donkor juxtaposes a reproduction of a nineteenth-century plan drawing of an unnamed slaver with an archival photo of African-American boxer Jack Johnson, the son of former slaves and the world heavyweight champion from 1908 to 1913.⁸ Donkor tempers the graphic immediacy of these naturalistically rendered visual components by placing a gold leaf-coloured circle behind Johnson's head, effectively marking him as a Christian saint. This aesthetic touch, borrowed from Byzantine and medieval European iconography, is consistent with Donkor's goal to recombine motifs in provocative ways. In a 2006 interview with cultural historian Alan Rice, Donkor explained:

[E]ven when I was a young art student, I was taught early on to look at a chair to the point where I don't see a chair, to the point where I see a shape and I see a strange shape or a table and we used to do these exercises where something can be transformed . . . because any time someone sees a man in a ship they think, 'Oh right, he's a slave, end of story', but that's not the end of the story, that's only the beginning of the story.⁹

As a revision to narratives of abject, black subjugation, *From Slave to Champ I* makes the slave ship the source of Johnson's strength, for his triumphal form stands astride it. Conceptually, Donkor is shifting the hermeneutics of the vessel, to transform it from dehumanising dungeon to critical forge of character, a rethinking that parallels scholarly consideration of the agency of enslaved Africans and not just their victimisation.

More recently, Donkor has been among the dozens of artists commissioned by British museums and other cultural institutions to create art for the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in 1807 (see also Rice, this issue). Nottingham's New Art Exchange and the Centre for Contemporary Art mounted 'Once Upon a Time in the West There Was Lace: An Investigation by Godfried Donkor' at the

Yard Gallery's Wollaton Hall in early 2007. Donkor's installation included six black, blue and orange lace costumes: the outfits were symbols of Nottingham's lace industry, cotton grown on British plantations in its former colonies, eighteenth-century European dress styles, the resonant status of Swiss- and Belgian-made lace in West Africa today, and the flashy hues of Caribbean dancehall fashion.¹⁰

The significance of international transatlantic trade to the Industrial Revolution and the role of enslaved, exploited and sexualised labour informed Donkor's lace project and several pictures from his *Madonna* collage series (2000–2003) also exhibited at Wollaton Hall. In these, Donkor assembled an array of reproduced images: the drawing of the nineteenth-century slaver he used in *From Slave to Champ I*; a graphic print of Columbus' ship the *Santa Maria*; book and newspaper illustrations of nineteenth-century boxers in fighting stances; and late twentieth-century pin-up photos from Trinidadian tabloids of black beauty pageant queens, some of them haloed by the artist and all laid atop blown-up photocopies of the *Financial Times*' pages.¹¹ The bold, varied graphics and the newspaper's densely printed text that backs them signify African slavery, European colonialism, Western athleticism, and black and Creole femininity. Brought together, they communicate Donkor's dim view of capitalism, its historic origins and its contemporary commoditised representations.

Donkor's contemporary, the white British artist Sue Flowers, mounted a more damning comment on the economy of slavery in *One Tenth*, a 2007 installation at the Lancaster Maritime Museum and part of 'ABOLISHED?', the Lancashire Museums' bicentenary commemoration (see also Rice, this issue). Commissioned to comment on Lancashire's central role in the slave trade, Flowers made a room-sized memorial to 550 African captives carried to the British colonies via Lancaster on the eighteenth-century slaver *Barlborough*. After researching the ship's history and the Atlantic Triangle trade of sugar, sugar-based goods and enslaved Africans, the artist chose to underscore the breadth of slavery's enterprise by making 55 a symbolic number – that is, one-tenth of the *Barlborough*'s human payload. She rendered 55 still-life drawings of one harvested sugar cane plant that had been divided in 55 pieces; 55 thigh-high columns simulating sugar loaves, reflective discs, and transparent glass panes etched with images of bound figures sat atop a large recreation of the *Description* plan drawn on the gallery floor. While the percentage of Africans who died in transit during the transatlantic slave trade is an unsettled number, Flowers' project title evokes a mortality rate figure agreed upon by many historians.

One Tenth is an account of transatlantic slavery situated in the local history of Lancaster, and appropriately, the figure of Dodshon Foster, an eighteenth-century Lancaster slave trader and investor in the *Barlborough*, looms large in this narrative. One piece, a bust of Foster designed by Flowers and made in collaboration with Mexican artist Tiburcio Soteno Fernandez, is white like marble, the traditional medium of heroic, neo-classical sculpture.¹² Yet, in accord with Flowers' stated goal 'to subvert our daily understanding of Lancaster and its history',¹³ the bust is made of solid sugar and is surrounded by sugar cubes stamped with numbers in another reference to the *Barlborough*'s human cargo. Enshrined within a vitrine, the sculpture faced William Tate's eighteenth-century oil painting of Foster, a work owned by the

Lancashire Museums and hung on an opposite wall of the gallery. Tate's ennobling presentation of this Quaker merchant starkly contrasts another of Flowers' depiction of him: a realist drawing resembling a phrenological model (and its derivative, the mug shot) etched on a mirror. The reflection of the museum visitor's face seen through the inscription of Foster's was meant to provoke contemplation, Flowers hoped, of the 'relationship with trade and how it impacts on the life of the producer and the purchaser, as relevant today as it is to the past'.¹⁴

Toward this end, Flowers and the artists who contributed to *One Tenth* also created new images and new models for present day 'production', 'trade' and cultural exchange. Ghanaian artist Jerry Blankson's *Slave Ship* textile, adorned by West African Adinkra symbols, hung above Flowers' gallery installation of *One Tenth*. To open the exhibition, Liverpool's Osun Arts Foundation performed *Igbekun*, a programme of dance and dialogue that commemorated the slave trade and its abolition. Finally, *Freedom, connected as one*, an appliqué flag designed by Sammy Faulkner – a Lancashire schoolgirl inspired by the Ashanti banner-making tradition – flew from the museum's flag pole during the exhibition's July to October 2007 run. Sewn by the British textile artist Jennifer Atkinson, Faulkner's flag proffered an affecting motif of interracial unity: in it, five white fingers clasp an outstretched black hand. This gesture parallels that which was inherent in *One Tenth*, for Flowers simultaneously encouraged Lancastrians to confront their county's centuries' long connection to Africa and to reach out to the wider, interconnected world. The artist makes this case in the *One Tenth* exhibition brochure:

We are collectively responsible for the world we live in. We are still responsible for how we choose to work, produce, purchase, produce and consume. Anti-slavery International and the Fairtrade movement, among others, attempt to make an impact on these global injustices; yet it is ourselves as individual global consumers that must consider our own consciences, and the impact of our economic choices on others as we go about our daily lives.¹⁵

In the works of Romuald Hazoumé and Skowmon Hastanan, active, contemporary economies are linked to the slave trade as continuations of corrupt, capitalist commerce. The Beninese artist Hazoumé (b. 1962) arranged recycled objects in the pattern of the *Description's* overhead view on the gallery floor in *La Bouche du Roi* (1997–2005), a multimedia installation he has deemed 'a warning against all forms of modern slavery – in all manner of forms . . . more sophisticated than those of the past, that apparently will provide fewer sleepless and guilt-ridden nights'.¹⁶

In title, the work cites the port near a Benin estuary (named 'The Mouth of the King') from which African captives were transported to the Americas during the transatlantic slave trade.¹⁷ The visual and verbal metaphors derived from this historical location, relating to water, mixtures, departures and cross-cultural interactions, offered Hazoumé rich themes to explore. Gathering hundreds of plastic oil canisters, Hazoumé cleverly used the mask-like features of their spouts, handles and bulges. He also ornamented them and surrounded them with found objects that stand in as relics of the transatlantic slave trade, such as empty liquor bottles, an antique rifle, a crude

scale and cowrie shells. Widely exhibited in the United Kingdom during the 2007 bicentenary year of the British abolition of slavery (and prior to that in the United States, Benin and France), *La Bouche du Roi* engaged contemporary events as well as the historic past. The installation includes a video of the present-day, illegal market in petroleum in Benin and Nigeria, in which jerry cans – ubiquitous throughout the developing world for carrying fuel, water and cooking oils – do extensive semiotic work. These vessels are signs of black bodies of Africans in trade and of indices of local, transnational and global transactions.

Ships in the Thai-born, American-based artist Skowmon Hastanan's work are statements about the traffic in bodies. In *Ship Fever Red Fever (Thai Chitralada)* (1999–2002) (Figure 3), Hastanan (b. 1961) crams inkjet-printed, enamel nail polish

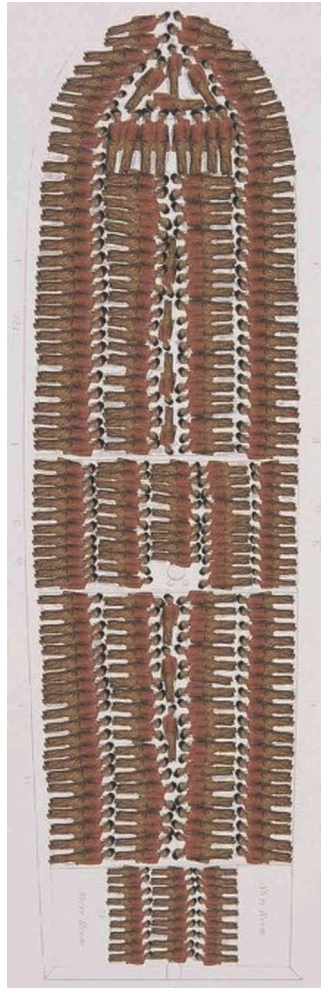


Figure 3. Skowmon Hastanan, *Ship Fever Red Fever (Thai Chitralada)*, 1999–2002. Inkjet print, 8 ½; x 11 inches. Private collection, USA. Image reproduced courtesy of the artist (Skowmon Hastanan), Bronx, New York, USA.

painted forms of Thai women (taken from Thai postage stamps of the 1970s) into the *Description's* ship hull outline.¹⁸ Explaining her choices for referential imagery, Hastanan has asserted:

[P]ostage art is a propaganda tool, [the] telling of a country's political history – like Caribbean stamps with Queen Elizabeth. I use the stamp descriptions in the artwork titles, pointing to [the] Thailand tourist industry using friendly women faces for (sexy) hospitality with exotic nostalgia and nationalistic imagery as a selling point. Thai airline attendants' uniforms are period clothes, just like the one in *Red Fever*. Women working in fancy hotels and restaurants are also wearing these uniforms.¹⁹

Hastanan has not simplistically equated black slavery with commercial airline travel. Rather, as a reader of African-American and African diaspora history and literatures, the artist thought through the familiar iconographies of colonising economies in which a ship – airborne or sea-faring – is a container transporting bodies and other commodities.²⁰ Her analysis of capitalism incorporates feminist concerns with the narrow visual tropes of female beauty and sexuality and the exotic picturing of Asia as sensual paradise. Furthermore, *Ship Fever Red Fever* reminds us that the parallels between both colonial and postcolonial imaginaries, as they have been constructed for and projected on Africa and Asia, are many and run deep.

Compared to the works of Bailey, Donkor, Flowers, Hastanan, Hazoumé and Pindell, Charles Campbell's untitled mixed media canvas work of 2005 (Figure 4) is especially abstract. Yet Campbell, a Jamaican-born, Britain-trained, Canada-based artist (b. 1970), has said that his practice is concrete, deeming it 'primarily concerned with mapping and questioning the relationship between meaning and image as they relate to my personal and cultural background'.²¹ At the same time, Campbell does not advance a functional role for art, in which the visual is truthful documentation and historical illustration. Instead, his intersecting and overlapping representation

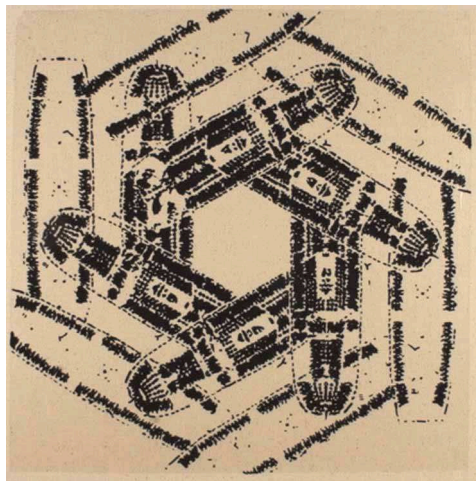


Figure 4. Charles Campbell, *Untitled (Hexagon)*, 2005. Oil and vellum on canvas, 18 x 18 inches. Courtesy of the artist, Victoria, Canada, and Mutual Gallery, Kingston, Jamaica.

of the *Brooks* overview drawing is undisguisedly decorative. Appropriately, Campbell has characterised his approach in aesthetic terms:

On the canvas the intention is not to create a clear narrative from the iconographic or symbolic reading of these elements, but rather to push and pull at how these meanings naturalize themselves on the images. For this purpose the visual language of pattern and symmetry, order and randomness is employed. The nature of the type of pattern used becomes its own vehicle for meaning and may either conform to or contradict the meaning applied to what the image signifies. The tension that exists between these two very distinct types of readings energizes the work and produces enigmas out of mere paint and canvas.²²

Although Campbell strives to produce enigmas, his moves do not appear evasive, as if he was trying to 'get away' from the history of transatlantic slave trade. Nor does he seem to want to distance his living black body from the symbolic black bodies of the *Description*. Above, his questioning of the relationship between meaning and images as they relate to him personally and culturally (i.e., individually and collectively) is consciously expressed. Yet Campbell's articulated connection to the *Brooks* image as an artist of African descent markedly differs from that of contemporary African-American artist Betye Saar who has said that it was 'part of my DNA'.²³ Spurning atavistic claims and racially essentialist notions of ancestral memory, Campbell is involved in a more active process of artistic meaning making. In his untitled piece, the slave ship is a base form for a geometric pattern that threatens to dissipate before the viewer's eyes. Campbell's effort is counter-documentary, contrasting the visual certainty of the *Description*, which, as Marcus Wood has appropriately concluded, is 'something clear and clean which paradoxically . . . has no right to be so'.²⁴

Inherently, the projects of Campbell, Donkor, Flowers, Hastanan, Hazoumé and Pindell challenge the diagrammatic order and organisation of the *Description* as an incomplete but insufficient accounting of the slave ship as site and instrument of unspeakable cruelty. Rightly tied to the era of the transatlantic slave trade and its historical specificity, the *Description* inspired these artists' broad considerations of the source, maintenance and trajectory of power. These artists have, to summon literary critic Cleanth Brooks' praise for the poet who captures a universal feeling, 'gone through the narrow door of the particular' in order to expand the *Description's* purview.²⁵ If, as the philosopher Judith Butler has argued, 'universality belongs to an open-ended hegemonic struggle',²⁶ these artists and their works are part of the discursive fray. They summon the *Description* in order to add to it, abstract it and ultimately destabilise it, opening up the political, historical and cultural pathways of interpretation. In their hands, the *Description* still 'means' as an eighteenth-century abolitionist statement, and as a newly formulated universality will do (to again use Butler's framework), it mobilises 'a new set of demands'²⁷ in response to current oppression, injustice and systemic practices against humanity.

Acknowledgements

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attend the symposium, and the artists and collecting institutions that permitted the reproduction of images that illustrate this article.

Notes

- [1] The name of the vessel was mistakenly misspelt as *Brookes* in the text of the *Description*. I have used the ship's real name here.
- [2] Unsworth, *Sacred Hunger*, cited in Wood, *Blind Memory*, 34–35.
- [3] Also see Finley, 'Committed to Memory'.
- [4] Turner's painting is in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and has been widely reproduced. Oursel's lithograph is in collection of the Musée d'Histoire de la Ville et du Pays Malouin in Saint Malo, France, and has been republished in the exhibition catalogue *Les Anneaux de la Memoir*. 'Cross-Section of a Slave Ship, 1857' appears in the *Illustrated London News*, 19 September 1857. The latter two images and more than 1,200 others are reproduced online at Handler and Tuite, 'Atlantic Slave Trade'.
- [5] Images from these publications are reproduced at Handler and Tuite, 'Atlantic Slave Trade'.
- [6] Slenes, 'African Abrams', 147–168.
- [7] *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 US 537 (1896).
- [8] The nineteenth-century image first published in Walsh, *Notices of Brazil*, n.p., is also available online as 'Cross-section of a Slave Ship, 1828–1829', from 'Atlantic Slave Trade' ([http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?categorynum=5&categoryName=Slave%20Ships%20and%20the%20Atlantic%20Crossing%20\(Middle%20Passage\)&theRecord=77&recordCount=78](http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?categorynum=5&categoryName=Slave%20Ships%20and%20the%20Atlantic%20Crossing%20(Middle%20Passage)&theRecord=77&recordCount=78)).
- [9] Rice, 'Commemorating Abolition'.
- [10] 'Once Upon A Time in the West There Was Lace: An Exhibition by Godfried Donkor at Wollaton Hall, Nottingham, 11 January–8 February 2008'. Available online at: <http://www.laceslavery.org.uk/public-exhibition/>.
- [11] Lauson, 'Review'.
- [12] *Sue Flowers: One Tenth*, n.p.
- [13] *Sue Flowers, One Tenth*, n.p.
- [14] *Sue Flowers, One Tenth*, n.p.
- [15] *Sue Flowers, One Tenth*, n.p.
- [16] Romauld Hazoumé, *La Bouche du Roi*.
- [17] Michael York, 'Carrying the Past'.
- [18] Chitralada is the name of Thai royal palace in Bangkok. With this citation, It Hastanan links the nationalist iconography of the Thai monarchy with the nation's international image as promoted and distributed produced in popular culture – from tourism advertising to the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *The King and I*.
- [19] Skowmon Hastanan, personal communication with the author, 12 January 2008.
- [20] Kee, 'Who's Afraid of Asian American Art?'.
- [21] 'Charles Campbell Contemporary Painting: About the Artist'. Available online at: <http://www.charlescampbellart.com/bio/bio.htm/>.
- [22] 'Charles Campbell Contemporary Painting: About the Artist'.
- [23] Quoted in abstract for Finley, "'It's Part of My DNA'".
- [24] Wood, *Blind Memory*, 32.
- [25] In his 1951 essay, 'Irony as a Principle of Structure', Brooks writes (p. 59): 'The poet can legitimately step out into the universal only by first going through the narrow door of the particular. The poet does not select an abstract theme and then embellish it with concrete details. On the contrary, he must establish the details, must abide by the details, and through his realization of the details attain to whatever general meaning he can attain. The meaning must issue from the particulars; it must not seem to be arbitrarily forced upon the particulars.'

- [26] Butler, 'Re-staging the Universal', 38.
- [27] Butler, 'Re-staging the Universal', 40, argues that 'universality can, through perverse reiterations, produce unconventional formulation of universality that expose the limited and exclusionary features of the former one at the same time that they mobilize a new set of demands'.

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